

THE BLOOMFIELD CITIZEN

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We are unusually well supplied this week with interesting communications. Mr. F. C. Bliss's paper is thoroughly careful and valuable. Mr. Weeks, the president of the B. F. A., speaks for the Fire Association; and "Prudence" brings up for consideration a serious matter with reference to the heating of the Public School building.

The Bloomfield Library Building is advertised for sale in foreclosure proceedings. The board of directors have carried this property at considerable personal loss for several years past. They can do so no longer. A movement is started to raise enough funds to retain the building for public purposes; but its success depends upon the co-operation of a considerable number of our citizens. It is desired that fifty individuals shall contribute the sum of fifty dollars each, amounting to twenty-five hundred dollars in all, with which the property may be retained, and held for the benefit of the subscribers of the fund. About twenty-five gentlemen have agreed to subscribe, and it is hoped the full number may be obtained. Any one feeling an interest in the matter can obtain full particulars from Mr. D. G. Garabrant, the Sec'y of the Association, or from any of the directors.

The Democratic politicians of Newark find themselves in a most embarrassing predicament. The common council of 1882, by a unanimous vote passed an ordinance that certain officials of the police department should hold their offices during good behavior, and should only be removed upon written complaint and a fair trial. So soon as the Democrats came into power this year they hastened to declare all these offices vacant, and to appoint Democrats to each of the positions. The other officers refused to vacate, and Judge Deane has just decided that the ordinance cannot be overcome by a simple resolution declaring the offices vacant, and that the only way to turn out the present incumbents will be to repeal the only civil service rule ever adopted by the city. We have no doubt that the greed for office will compel these Democratic Solons to take this step; but meanwhile it is very entertaining to see how they dread to proclaim the fact, that Civil Service Reform must go to the dogs when it stands between a Democrat and an office.

"GOOD LORD! GOOD DEVIL!"

We observe that the *Newark Daily Advertiser* is exercised about the Rev. Heber Newton's alleged departure from the faith. Not half so much so, we warrant, as some of its readers, last week, must have been exercised about the *Advertiser's* extraordinary lapse from good morals. The Louisiana lotteries have been in great trouble in the Post-office and the Courts. The Postmaster-General has set his face like a flint against polluting the mail-bags with their stuff. At last accounts, they had carried a technical point in their favor. But by what technicality they have carried off the pink of respectability on the corner of Broad and Market streets, Newark, we can't tell. Of course it couldn't have been through any sudden lapse of the moral or religious memory; for, on the opposite side of the sheet containing the lottery advertisement, Jan. 16, was an editorial paragraph declaring Mr. Newton "a thousand times more dangerous to religion than Mr. Ingersoll." The man who was so scared in a storm at sea, that he fell on his knees and began to invoke the Lord and the devil alternately, was certainly not more "mixed" than our neighbor in undertaking at once to serve the Lord with editorials and the devil with advertisements. He ought at least to keep the two further apart than the thickness of a sheet of paper.

By keeping the immoral advertisement and the religious editorial for alternate days, he might afford a double gratification to those of his readers who would like to put the one into the grate with a long pair of tongs, and to send the other, marked, to the "dangerous" clergyman

as a testimonial. Mr. Newton will never know what he has lost by the *Advertiser's* strange inadvertence to observe so natural a precaution. On the contrary, we fear that the *Advertiser* has only given him aid and comfort in his course. It is altogether too probable that sundry persons, with intent to harden him in his disregard of orthodox opinions, have sent him divers copies of the *Newark Daily Advertiser* of January 16, with the immoral advertisement and the orthodox editorial, each conspicuously bordered with the appropriate pencilling, the former in infernal red and the latter in ecclesiastical blue, as a specimen of the Phariseism that he must resist. We hope, however, that Mr. Newton will not in this case make the rash generalizations he is accused of making in the "higher criticism." He probably knows, as well as some New Jersey people, that a little money will, in some quarters, go a great way, and that want of principle, as well as want of happiness, will make strange bed-fellows.

FAILURES AND THE BUSINESS OUT-LOOK.

In a recent issue of THE CITIZEN, Mr. E. J. Whitehead, in a letter to the editor, questions the accuracy of some of the conclusions reached in an article reprinted in this journal from "Bradstreet's," a financial and commercial journal printed in New York, in which the mercantile failures throughout the country in 1883 were subjected to a special analysis.

The queries of Mr. Whitehead are such as might naturally suggest themselves to the lay student of the topic considered, and we are glad of the opportunity to make such explanations as are suggested; after due examination of the points involved. Our correspondent says he desires "to analyze some of their (Bradstreet's) so-called facts and mention some omissions, which may possibly, if true, change your (THE CITIZEN'S) conclusions."

We quote Mr. Whitehead again: "The firms doing business in 1873 are said to have been 548,180; those in 1883, 828,823; and this difference of 280,643 is put down as the gain in ten years. This shows an increase of nearly fifty per cent. in business firms, while our population has increased less than twenty per cent. in the same time, which seems very improbable."

We feel obliged to differ with our esteemed correspondent as to both these assertions. The gain in the number of business firms of 280,643, between 1873 and 1883 amounts to but a fraction over thirty-three per cent. (instead of "nearly fifty per cent."). As to the increase in population during that period, there are no definite statistics for guidance, except those of the census of 1870 and of 1880. The gain in population in that decade amounted to 11,594,495, or slightly in excess of thirty per cent. instead of twenty per cent., if this be accepted as a gauge for the decade from 1873 to 1883. This ratio of the increase in the number of traders (thirty-three per cent.) to that of the increase in population (thirty per cent.) does not present the opportunity for inference as to its being "improbable," which is quoted above.

Mr. W.'s explanation that "Commercial Agencies are fallible" is undoubtedly correct, as a general proposition, but is now seen to lose its force as applied to the (his) supposed excess gain in the number engaged in business as compared with the total population. His second inference that Bradstreet's Agency "had far greater facilities in 1883 for gathering these facts than in 1873," does not preclude the possibility of that agency having been quite as thorough in the latter year as in the former. It unquestionably has greater facilities to-day than three years ago, but this need mean only that it can obtain the same data at less expense and trouble than it once could, and can hardly be used to infer that it could not obtain a complete list at the earlier period.

But our correspondent amplifies his argument by saying that one of the two mercantile agencies "in 1877 had 100,000 more business firms" mentioned in its books "than the other," and that "two weeks ago one of these agencies reported 346 failures for the week, while the other reported 286 for the same week."

We have gone out of our way to look into this, and feel assured, that could the gentleman to whom we are replying have made a careful investigation of the subject, he would have hesitated before placing himself on record as last quoted.

The hundred thousand firms he mentions in one agency's commercial reports (Dun's) in excess of those of Bradstreet's in 1877, on examination appear to be due to the including by the former of cotton planters and other classes of agricultural and of professional people (whose names are no doubt useful in such a list) but whose names, we learn, are carefully excluded by Bradstreet's, as in no sense constituting members of the mercantile or trading community. Brokers of some kinds and houses engaged in a purely speculative business, we also find to be absent from the pages of the book published by the latter agency, and, as we understand it, justly so; for such firms can in no way enter into any comparison of purely mercantile traders and failures. As to one agency reporting a number of failures per week in excess of another, that is purely a matter of detail. The annual totals are a better test of efficiency, and our recollection is that Bradstreet's aggregate of mercantile failures for 1883 exceeded Dun's by nearly, if not quite, 1,000. Delays in the mail or telegraphic delivery may destroy the real meaning of a single weekly report.

Mr. Whitehead inquires why 1878 is

taken as a year with which to compare totals. "Why not compare 1883, and its 10,299 failures with 1880 and its 4,300?" The answer we might make may not be that which the writer of the article in Bradstreet's would have in mind; but there appears to us to be an excellent reason why the commercial death-rate should be compared with that of 1878, in preference to that of 1880. The former year was the last in a series in a period of commercial depression—much the same as it now appears probable, 1883 has been. After the boom of 1870-73, the season of contraction and economy continued until the close of 1878. Then came a revival. The first "wait" was of five years. Since 1878 it has again been five years; we have had a commercial and industrial "boom" and another period of contraction and depreciation. There are indeed many reasons why 1883 and 1878 have similarities enough to suggest special comparison. The stimulation of industrial and commercial growth has been unnatural, abnormal, during the past five years. It is not now necessary to enter into detail. But this enormous growth in business ventures has caused the excess of three per cent. in the rate of growth of business concerns as compared with the increase in population, which excites the surprise of our correspondent to such a degree that he makes a mistake in calculating their respective percentages. This hurry in development—attended as it must be by undue haste and lack of judgment in trading, naturally accounts for a high commercial death-rate.

MARSHAL MARSH'S MISTAKE.

In common with a large number of our fellow citizens we were surprised to see a "protest" issued by Mr. A. J. Marsh, our Fire Marshal, and circulated in a small handbill throughout the town. But we were still more surprised to observe that he did this because he claimed that his article had been denied publication by us. This is decidedly incorrect. We published the communication of "Fireman" with perfect readiness, and, having received Mr. Marsh's paper at a very late hour, we merely held it as being superseded by the other statement, and notified him of the fact, asking what he wished us to do with it thereafter. He preferred to go on the record personally, all alone on his own account. We object to that publication as unnecessary for the public good or for the interests of the Fire Association, and we positively deny that there was any sufficient cause for it given by our action upon his paper.

COLDS.

The *New York Herald*, during the last year or two, has published several editorials, the object of which was to convince the multitude that the ordinary cold was much more frequently due to the exposure of the stomach to improper kinds or quantities of food, than to the exposure of the body to improper weather. Other papers, we have noticed, frequently speak in the same strain, but converts seem to be few. That mere exposure to cold or wet cannot be the real and only cause of a cold, has been held by writers of eminence since the days of Franklin, and we know not but for many centuries previous to his day. There are many curious facts on record about the catching of colds. The lumbermen of Maine, during cold weather, will remain in the water for hours, and go all day with wet feet and legs without a sign of a cold; but when it grows warm, even though they expose themselves but little, they almost all take heavy colds. We never were among the lumbermen ourselves, and give this on the authority of the *Boston Journal of Chemistry*. A physician, "in good and regular standing," vouches for the truth of the story that the members of a certain family invariably had severe colds after eating roast goose.

There is no manner of doubt that many colds and sore throats are caused by a disordered digestion. A few days since, a person came under our notice with a sore throat and cold in the head. They both yielded in a single day to what might seem to many a curious prescription—bicarbonate of soda. It is likewise a noticeable fact that those who go out in the open air a great deal and are not deterred by the going down of the sun or the approach of a storm, are not those most subject to colds. It is also noticeable that fresh air by day, an open window at night, and colds, are all three feared by the same class of people, and that the said people have many colds. It thus seems that bad air and over-heated rooms, instead of preventing trouble, cause it, and that large doses of cold pure air act as a preventive. Led by these observations many go to the opposite extreme, and become what the world sometimes styles in its wrath, "fresh air fiends." Others believe that abstemious eating is the sure remedy for colds, and almost all other ills. A favorite haunt of the "fresh air fiends" is the railroad car. May the class soon join the dodo and the trilobite in the realms of paleontology!

As an example of the opinions of the starvationists, we append the following quotation from an article by C. E. Page, M. D.:

"I have, in my efforts to 'catch' cold, submitted myself to exposure that to the minds of most people would appear of a suicidal character, wearing low shoes and walking in snow and sleet until both socks and shoes were saturated, sitting an hour in that condition and going to bed without warming my feet; removing flannel undergarments in midwinter on the approach of colder weather, and attending to out-door affairs without the overcoat usually worn; sleeping with a current of air blowing directly on my head and shoulders; sitting entirely naked in a draught, on a very cold, damp night in

the fall, for fifteen minutes before getting into bed, wearing cotton night shirt and sleeping under light bed covers, on the night following the use of flannel gown and heavy-weight bedclothes; rising from bed on a cold, rainy morning, and sitting naked for an hour, writing, and then putting on shirt and trousers, only, the shirt almost saturated with rain, and the trousers quite damp, from hanging by the window—these and similar experiments I have tried repeatedly, but without catching cold. I become cold, and become warm again, that is all."

He attributes his being able to do all this with impunity to eating properly. We should like to hear his opinion on such a course of exposure, as an active cause in developing pneumonia.

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